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ground for judging the virtues of different taxes than is the case where the arrangement is reversed. If we investigate such questions as progression in taxation, the faculty theory, and the canons of taxation before we examine the details of a tax system, why not complete the foundation work by surveying the general principles of shifting and incidence?

The order in which taxes are treated is apparently largely a matter of convenience since most classifications are held to be of little value in providing air-tight compartments for taxes as they actually function. Chapters are given to customs duties, property taxes, income taxes, inheritance taxes and, in addition, there are the long-needed chapters on property tax reform, the taxation of corporations, and the single tax. To secure condensation, and not at all because they are related, excises, capitation taxes, and business taxes are thrown together in a single chapter. The excess-profits tax is treated very briefly under war finance.

On controversial matters the author avoids extremes. For example, he states that while "the extensive use of taxes has much to commend it," yet "the proper combination of loans and taxes forms the best war finance policy." Again, he has no sympathy for a single tax of any kind, although he acknowledges the value of agitation for a single tax on economic rent in so far as it has emphasized the defects in our fiscal system. Other illustrations of this kind might be given in connection with his discussion of shifting and incidence, the separation of state and local tax sources, and customs duties. The even temper of the book will not be relished by the propagandist, but it should be of material help to the student who is just beginning to grope his way through the intricacies of fiscal policy.

FRANK T. STOCKTON.

University of South Dakota.

Taxation, Yesterday and Tomorrow. By ROBERT JONES. (London: P. S. King & Son. 1921. Pp. 147. 3s. 6d.)

"This little volume," says the preface, "is not written as a textbook, though it contains textbook material." It seems to have been written in an attempt to present the newest leveling theories of taxation in a favorable light to those unacquainted with them, but whether intended more to educate the stolid conservative or to stimulate the radically inclined reader is not apparent. The writer is a disciple of the Webbs and is already known as the author of *The Nature and First Principle of Taxation*. He has a warm sympathy with most of the "liberal" fiscal proposals of the day, which leads him at times into statements that are certain to excite suspicion or provoke opposition. This is especially true of the first half of the book.

Examples are the following: on page 5 the author states that if the British government had received all the rent of British land, no taxes would have been necessary before the war; he states (p. 43) that Henry George's maxims of taxation are decidedly better than Adam Smith's; he speaks (p. 49) of the "diminution of taxes by State and municipal enterprises" as a modern development, as if it were an unquestioned fact that such enterprises have generally enabled taxes to be diminished. Of course, some of these provoking statements are matters of opinion concerning which the author may be right, but the dogmatic style in which they are made neither convinces nor conciliates.

Another instance may also be mentioned, not very important in itself, but nevertheless an example of misleading inference—that is, the description of Solon's income tax (if it was an income tax) as steeply progressive. Inasmuch as the highest rate went into effect when the income reached 500 medimni, or 850 bushels of grain, it must be considered a degressive tax, not a progressive one. Such a yield can easily be obtained from a sixty-acre farm; it could hardly have been the equivalent in purchasing power of more than \$2000 of present-day money income. Moreover, the amount of tax collected from each class is not known, nor whether it was an annual tax or an extraordinary levy.

On the other hand, the later chapters of this book deserve to be highly recommended. That on justice in taxation is very good indeed, largely because it takes into account opposing views, and endeavors to explain and reconcile them. There is a very interesting passage on the psychology of ethical standards leading to the conclusion that changes must come by steps rather than by leaps and that men's "reasonable expectations" should be secured as far as possible.

Like nearly all recent English writers on finance, Mr. Jones considers the capital levy and its alternatives, of which he favors a ten-year scheme involving increased super-taxes and inheritance duties—in fact a deliberate attempt to take all "unproductive surpluses" for the public use. He would even establish an absolute maximum of £10,000 for inheritances. "There is no case," he says (p. 118), "in economics or in ethics, for the inheritance of any but moderate fortunes."

Mr. Jones submits his proposals not as part of a revolutionary program, but as an alternative to violent revolution. As such they deserve careful consideration, and in fact should be much less seriously opposed by economists than by readers not acquainted with theories of margins and surpluses.

RUFUS S. TUCKER.

Harvard University.